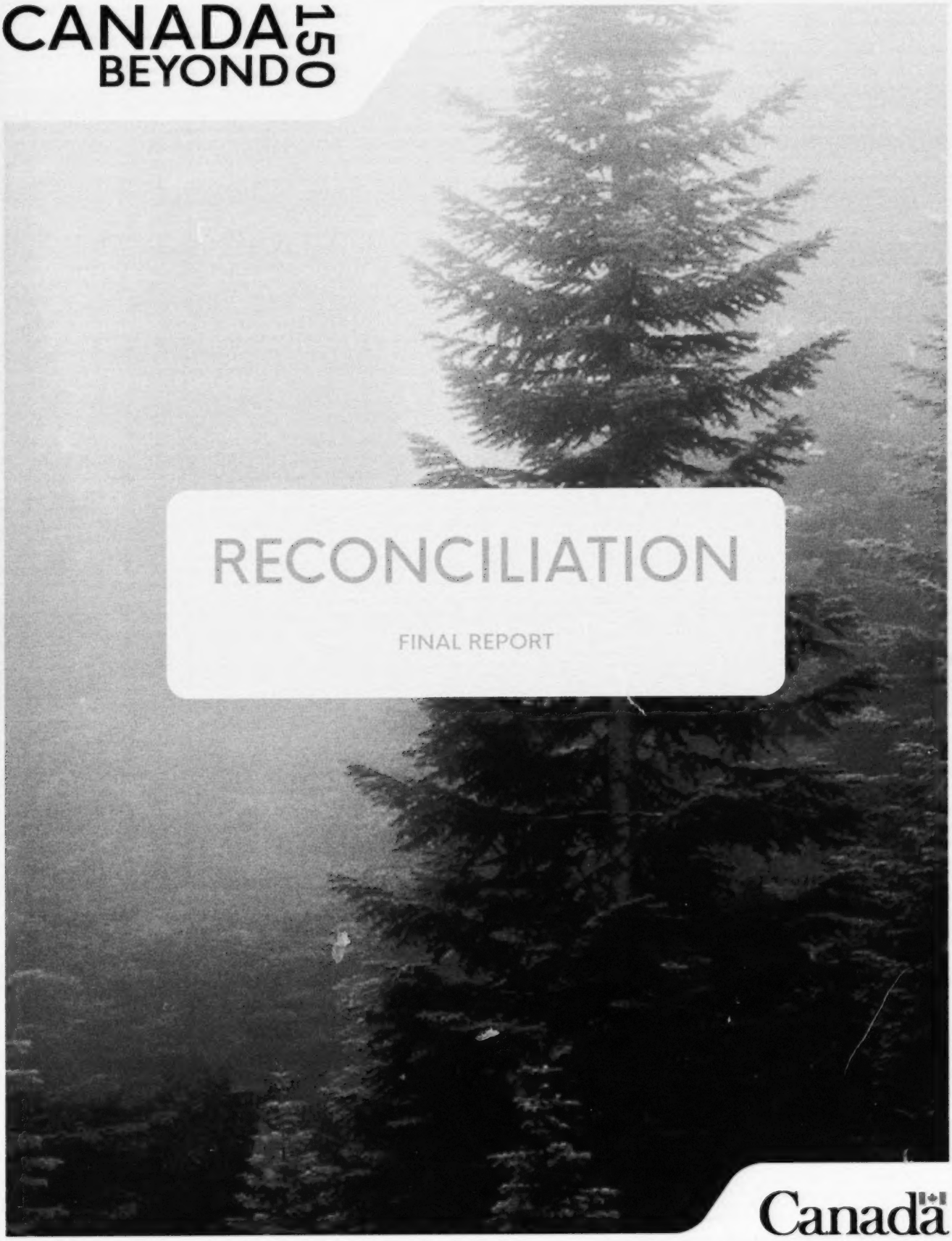
CANADA 150
BEYOND



RECONCILIATION

FINAL REPORT

Canada

RECONCILIATION

This document does not represent an official policy position of the Government of Canada. Instead, it records the work of a sub-group of new public servants who participated in Canada Beyond 150, a professional development program co-championed by the Privy Council Office and Policy Horizons Canada. The program was designed to support the development of new public servants, and to drive a culture change within the public service. The participants were invited to use foresight, design thinking and engagement tools to explore policy issues relating to diversity and inclusion.

DECOLONIZING THE PUBLIC SERVICE

THE WORK OF RECONCILIATION IS URGENT. CONSIDER:

- The overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in prisons.
- The alarming number of Indigenous children in care.
- Unclean drinking water.
- Colten Boushie.
- Tina Fontaine.

THE WORK IS UNCOMFORTABLE. IF YOU'RE COMFORTABLE, YOU'RE NOT DOING RECONCILIATION.

ONLY A DECOLONIZED PUBLIC SERVICE CAN SUPPORT THE TRUE WORK OF RECONCILIATION.

This report is an urgent call to transform the public service. It promotes one that advances reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in all aspects of its work. The *Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples* and the shift to rights recognition through the *Recognition and Implementation of Rights Framework* offer the public service a unique opportunity. We must embrace change in Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples, and transform our operations and practices – from those rooted in colonization to those that embrace reconciliation.

Our partners – the people and organizations who generously shared their time, teachings, and experiences with us, and who were a crucial part of this journey – reiterated this urgency. These partners deepened our knowledge and understanding of reconciliation, and helped us open our hearts and minds to new perspectives.

One particular teaching had a profound effect on our work, by illustrating the need for transformational change:

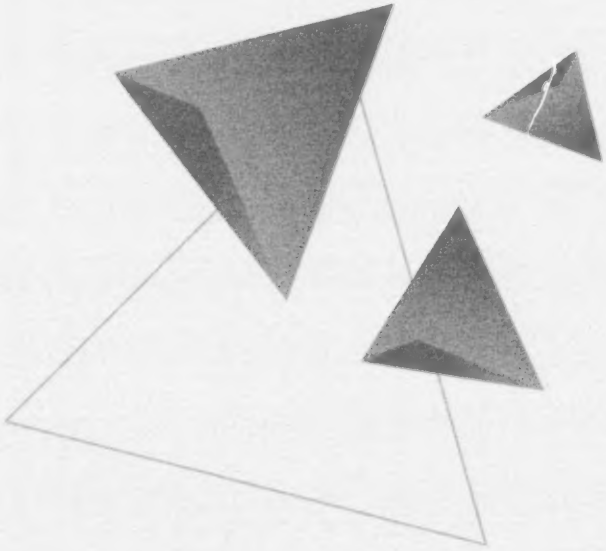
We are always trying to come up with new solutions and policies to fix things and to create the change that is needed... but it doesn't matter how great the new solution is, because it has been planted on a poisoned tree. The roots and trunk of this tree are the colonial, paternalistic, racist structures that are still in place. So we keep putting new branches on a poisoned tree, expecting that they can flourish. They can't. So the question is: how do we plant a new tree?

With the help of Indigenous partners, we identified three policy themes aimed at decolonizing the public service.

- Representation - the public service needs greater representation of Indigenous voices in decision-making.
- Transformation - public servants need to undertake a personal journey, to expose them to Indigenous ways of addressing policy.
- Relationships - the public service needs to rethink how it interacts with Indigenous communities on a day-to-day basis.

A common government approach is to...	A reconciliation approach asks us to...
• See Indigenous issues and reconciliation as complex and difficult to tackle	• Acknowledge that the complexity is largely due to past government policies and legislation • Use the Calls to Action and UNDRIP as a roadmap to a relationship-based and holistic approach to action
• Tackle matters incrementally	• Take a transformational view (plant a new tree!)
• Have a bias for finality (i.e., check a box, or think in task-completion then moving on to the next deliverable)	• Acknowledge the need for renewal and ongoing relationships (e.g., see treaties as living relationship)
• Maximize economies of scale at the expense of other considerations like community needs	• Honour the government-to-government, Inuit-Crown, nation-to-nation commitment, and welcome the diversity of Indigenous communities • Acknowledge that Indigenous governance structures will not always align with structures established under *The Indian Act* • Acknowledge that the drivers behind seeking levels of aggregation (i.e., economies of scale) may be outweighed by other considerations (i.e., recognition of rights, relationships)
• Work with whomever is convenient and whose goals/activities align with our agenda	• Work with credible sources, respecting Indigenous governance structures and representation • Acknowledge that we don't set the agenda alone; we need to listen and work together
• Accept the status quo and think there is no other way	• Acknowledge that the status quo is colonial, paternalistic, racist and cannot continue • Acknowledge that existing indigenous rights are not being respected and there is a clear need for action • Challenge the status quo and build ways to do what is asked by the communities

A common government approach is to...	A reconciliation approach asks us to...
• Challenge community proposals and ways of knowing, and focus on compliance and accountability to the federal government	• Accept that communities are the experts in their own needs, and trust their solutions • Acknowledge that indigenous governments are primarily accountable to their own citizens • Establish a mutual accountability approach • Acknowledge Indigenous sources of law and knowledge
• Come to the table with a formed idea	• Come to the table with humility, an open mind, and the intent to truly let Indigenous people self-determine
• See land as a resource	• Acknowledge that Indigenous peoples can have a relational approach to land as part of the overall natural system • Acknowledge that land and animal-based indicators may have a role in discussions where you may not see the connection as easily

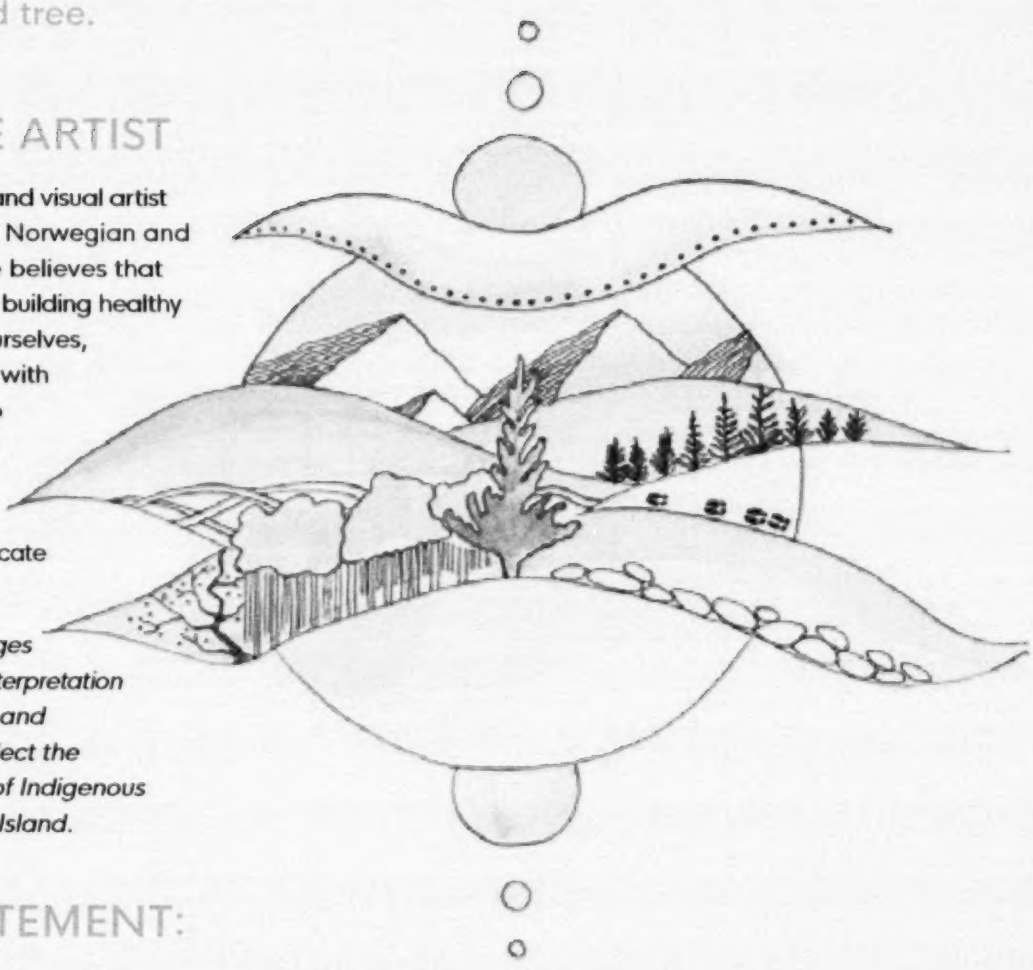


During the project, the reconciliation team worked with Indigenous artist and public servant Karin Moen, Elder Barb, and Elder-in-training Jenny, who helped us understand the meaning of the teaching of the poisoned tree.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Karin Moen is a poet and visual artist of mixed Cree, Metis, Norwegian and Scottish descent. She believes that reconciliation is about building healthy relationships within ourselves, with each other, and with the land. She hopes to become a graphic designer to help groups of various backgrounds communicate and resolve disputes.

Disclaimer: These images represent the artist's interpretation of the team's journey, and do not necessarily reflect the diverse perspectives of Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island.



ARTIST STATEMENT: BALANCE

This is a time of balance and natural processes, in flux. Language, law and land are one. We are spirit, and we have purpose. This image is not meant to resurrect an idyllic past, nor is it meant to act as the beginning in a linear narrative. This image simply represents one phase in a natural cycle – a stage of balance. We move in and out of balance through natural processes.

REPRESENTATION:
ADDRESSING OFFICIAL LANGUAGE BARRIERS TO INDIGENOUS RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND ADVANCEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Official Language requirements can be a barrier to recruitment and promotion of Indigenous peoples in the federal public service. Indigenous public servants have lower rates of promotion, and are underrepresented in the executive ranks.

We recognize the importance of official language rights in Canada. We also see that work to decolonize the public service should not cause unnecessary conflict among rights or groups. Here, we focus on the reconciliation aspects of language requirements in the public service.

The *Many Voices One Mind* report, and what we heard from partners, confirms the need for this intervention. One partner, an Indigenous public servant, shared: "If I had one elevator ride with the Prime Minister, I'd ask him why I have to learn French instead of my own language in order to advance within the public service."

For many indigenous public servants, official language requirements are a reminder of Canada's colonial past and present. While the government was giving French and English equal status, they were actively destroying Indigenous languages with policies and actions like the Indian Residential School system.

We recommend that Indigenous public servants be exempt from Official Language requirements, and identify ways for them to learn and retain Indigenous languages. We would need to ensure cultural safety (an environment that is physically, spiritually, socially and emotionally safe), so that Indigenous public servants do not experience challenges to their identity, and that Indigenous languages are respected.

We also need to explore how technology can facilitate Indigenous language training and translation (i.e. Google translate, smart headphones); deliver services in the Indigenous languages of regional populations to increase public service job opportunities; and develop new reporting strategies. That is, if a manager and an employee cannot communicate well in an official language, the employee could report to an alternate manager.

Success could mean: more Indigenous public servants in higher positions; equivalent promotion rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees; understanding how devastating colonialism is on Indigenous languages and cultures; and increase in the number of public servants who self-identify as Indigenous.

RECOGNIZING THE POISONED TREE

In December, we met with a Maliseet Elder, Elder Mac. After hearing about the project, he had some hard truths to share. With good intention, he asked: is reconciliation just another theme you can experiment with? Will we just walk away from it and from the relationships we built when the program ends? He reminded us that reconciliation is not only about Indigenous people, but all people on this land we call Canada. He also said that we were using the same approach that continues to hurt the government's relations with Indigenous communities.

Our experiences taught us we need to quit doing business as usual–we need to decolonize the public service.

Elder Barb of the turtle clan, Mohawk Nation, and Elder-in-training Jenny, joined us to address these challenges. By participating in ceremony and working on policy with an Elder, we saw issues from a new perspective: No report, textbook, or memo could ever replace the oral teachings that they shared.

ARTIST STATEMENT: THE COLONIAL TREE

The natural cycle is interrupted by racism, violence, genocide and imperialism. This image represents imbalance, harshness and a desire to superimpose a hierarchical "order," at the expense of the balance that gives us life. The colonial "tree" has been superimposed on our balanced world, throwing it out of balance, but not replacing it. Because we are still here. We have endured. And we can rebuild, by working to restore balance to our relationships with each other and the land. We can and must work to move on from the imbalanced and wounded space. To heal and unsettle, and to ensure that we acknowledge that we do not need to live in the space defined by the colonial tree.

TRANSFORMATION:
PUBLIC SERVANTS' LEARNING JOURNEY

Find tools and incentives for public servants to take a personal learning journey that would expose them to Indigenous ways of addressing policy issues.

A decolonised public service would support and motivate employees to go on learning journeys beyond history and textbooks. Canada needs a public service that understands, values, and uses Indigenous histories, realities, and ways of knowing.

The success of learning journeys need the public service to value and use Indigenous ways of knowing and problem solving, like oral tradition and sharing in circle. All public servants need to learn about Indigenous issues, regardless of their function. Canada could establish a centre of learning to facilitate these learning journeys.

Building on current work, this centre could partner with Indigenous organisations, like the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, and advance this work by connecting public servants to tools and partners (e.g., Indigenous people, elders, academics, the Canada School of Public Service) to educate in support of Call to Action #57. The centre could plan and promote secondment opportunities for public servants to work in Indigenous communities and governments, and provide resources to Indigenous partners to work as functional experts.

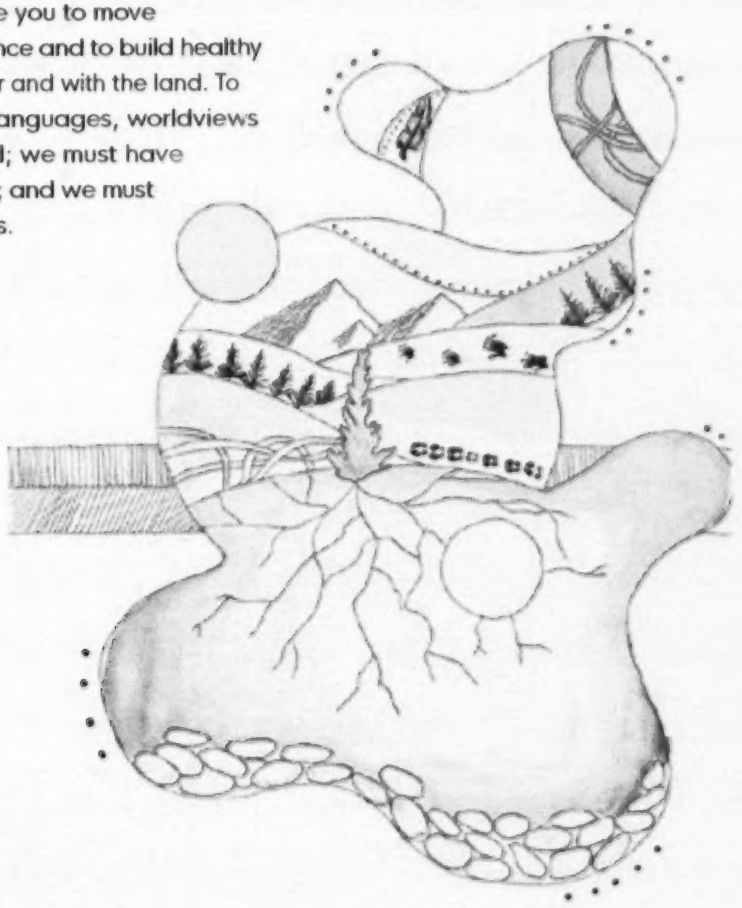
To succeed, the centre would be led by Indigenous executives, staffed with over half of its positions staffed by Indigenous employees, and have enough funding to carry out its functions. The centre would manage and report to the public on how the public service is valuing Indigenous ways of knowing and problem solving. Performance agreements of senior public servant executives (including Deputy Heads) could include responsibility for developing, implementing and improving ways to advance the TRC's Call to Action #57, and create space for Indigenous approaches in their department's work.

BALANCE AND NATURAL PROCESSES IN FLUX

Our talks with the artist about what should go into the images brought many points on the artist's canvas. Individuals were able to speak about how they interpreted the symbolism in the images. These images and the collaboration they invited made the next part of collaboration easier. The trust we built, and our mutual respect of the diverse viewpoints, brought together Elder, Elder-in-training, senior policy developer and participants to develop and refine these three policy interventions.

ARTIST STATEMENT: RESTORING BALANCE

To all inhabitants of Turtle Island, we invite you to move away from the colonial tree, to restore balance and to build healthy relationships within ourselves, with each other and with the land. To do this, we must work to ensure Indigenous languages, worldviews and peoples are meaningfully recognized; we must have humility to learn from others and the land; and we must have courage to transform our relationships.



RELATIONSHIPS:
TRANSFORM HOW CANADA INTERFACES WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Co-develop, region by region, ways to move to true Nation-to-Nation, Inuit-Crown, and government-to-government relationships.

Indigenous partners describe the current relationship with government as one maintained by ever-changing bureaucrats and driven by unreliable funding,isolated and insufficient program delivery, reporting problems and one-way accountability.

This is how we recommend the government build on existing ways of renewing relationship through in-depth co-development, region by region, with Indigenous communities and Nations:

1. Shift government structures away from the current model of fragmented program delivery, provide instead holistic support to communities and Nations in their journeys. This means enabling long-term relationships and ensuring whole-of-government coordination;
2. Create mechanisms of funding beyond the current ones, to give full authority to Indigenous communities and Nations. For example, what if the Ktunaxa Nation received direct funding authorities from Treasury Board; and
3. Decentralize government decision-making by putting authority and accountability into the hands of regional public servants. The goal is for community-driven, Indigenous institutions to make their own decisions.

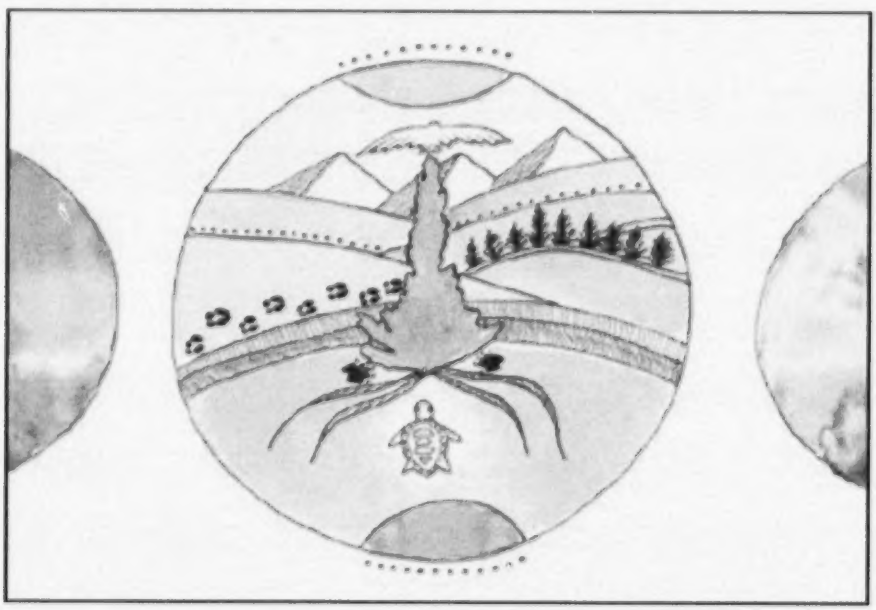
Many types of new relationships are possible. For example, picture a funded Indigenous community representative working side by side with a Government of Canada 'ambassador'. This ambassador works as a window to the government, representing the Crown and all government portfolios, and has an ongoing relationship with this community. Flexible, reliable, and sufficient funding flows directly to the community, which is responsible for setting local priorities, keeping their promises, and being accountable to its members.

A NEW TREE

The work of reconciliation has only just begun. We hope to continue the conversations and partnerships we built during this project, and to start new ones. Our proposed interventions are ways to decolonize the public service. They are seeds for a new tree.

ARTIST STATEMENT: A BALANCED REFLECTION

Our collective and individual work has brought us to a place of balance and reflection. Look internally, look to the ones who came before, and reflect with others to uncover what this balance means. It is important to note that reconcilia-tion is a journey – not a destination. We are all at different phases of our reconcil-iation journeys, so this stage will arrive at different moments for different people.



RECONCILIATION

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